

# ALTMAN SIEGEL

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Liam Everett  
*Ash Wednesday*  
July 18 – September 30, 2020

*"Lady, three white leopards sat under a juniper-tree  
In the cool of the day, having fed to satiety  
On my legs my heart my liver and that which had been contained  
In the hollow round of my skull. And God said  
Shall these bones live? shall these  
Bones live?"*

- T.S. Eliot

Altman Siegel is pleased to present an online exhibition featuring a series of exceptional new drawings by Liam Everett. Made under the Covid19 quarantine in March and April 2020, these colorful compositions center around themes of Vanitas, picturing skulls and figures moving in and out of abstraction. Although drawing has been an integral part of Everett's practice, this is the first time he has released and exhibited works on paper from the studio. The figuration that emerges from the fluid pools of color represents a significant departure from his largely abstract painting practice.

A palpable emotional tenor hints at the intensity of the circumstances under which these drawings were made. Everett and his family moved from Northern California to Paris in 2019, in part to be closer to his mother-in-law, who is declining from advanced Alzheimer's. As the coronavirus pandemic swept Europe, Everett and his young daughter rushed to join his wife and her parents in a small village outside Toulouse, to prevent the lockdown from separating the family indefinitely.

Everett arrived in the rural enclave with very few artistic materials, though he found himself with access to his father-in-law's tremendous research library, focused primarily on Late Medieval and Renaissance painting and architecture. As the family sheltered-in-place, the garden outside burst into bloom and Everett began to read and to draw. Adapting his studio practice to the changing rhythms of life under quarantine, Everett found himself in a

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moment of extreme polarization, witnessing the beauty of the natural world reawakening with the new growth of spring, while the threat of the virus and impending death consumed all thought and conversation.

T.S. Elliot's poem, *Ash Wednesday*, served as mercurial support in this time of radical change, prompting an exploration of the invisible line between mortality and immortality. Written in the year Elliot converted to Anglicanism, the poem is often described as investigation of spirituality, or a turning away from the sickness and decay of reality towards God or the spiritual world. The skulls that emerge from Everett's drawings clearly allude to the evanescence of life, while the abstracted figures that appear to contemplate the skulls push the reading away from a reflection on Christianity to a more universal human reflection on being in a time of crisis.

Born in 1973 in Rochester, New York, Everett lives and works in Northern California. He has had solo exhibitions at *kamel mennour*, Paris; *Galerie Greta Meert*, Brussels; *Eleni Koroneou Gallery*, Athens; *Office Baroque*, Brussels; *On Stellar Rays*, New York; *Paul Kasmin Gallery*, New York; and *White Columns*, New York. His work has been included in exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Biennale of Painting, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; *Galerie Art & Essai*, Université de Rennes, Rennes, France; *Arndt Singapore*; *di Rosa*, Napa; U.C. Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive; *Headlands Center for the Arts*, Sausalito, California; *San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art*; *CCA* and the *Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts*, San Francisco. Everett has received the *SECA Art Award* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2017), the *Richard Diebenkorn Teaching Fellowship* at the San Francisco Art Institute (2013) and the *San Francisco Artadia Award* (2013). His monograph, *Without an Audience*, published by Altman Siegel and *kamel mennour*, Paris/London with contributions by Jenny Gheith, Jonathan Griffin, Hope Mohr and Liam Everett, is on display at the gallery.

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